



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

TO: Local and Intermediate School Superintendents, Authorizers and Directors of Public School Academies, High School Principals

FROM: Jeremy M. Hughes, Ph.D. *JMH*
Deputy Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer

DATE: April 5, 2007

SUBJ: End-of-Course Assessments for High School Course/Credit Areas

I am writing to provide you with further information about the Department's plans for supplying the Secondary Credit Assessments required of the State in the recently adopted high school graduation legislation (Public Acts 123 and 124 of 2006). The Department has plans to create two types of assessments to satisfy this legislative requirement: interim benchmark assessments aligned to units of instruction for each course/credit area, and summative end-of-course assessments.

This legislation requires the Department to provide end-of-course exams in each of the major course/credit areas within three years. Although the Department was given three years to develop the SCAS, local school districts have inquired about the schedule for making these examinations available, particularly wondering whether an Algebra I exam might be available this school year. Therefore, I want to provide you with some information about some resources that will be available shortly as well as our plans to develop the more complete Secondary Credit Assessment System.

First, the Department has developed prototypes of end-of-course exams in two areas: Algebra I and Geometry. These exams were written by Michigan educators last summer and were pilot-tested in Michigan classrooms in January. They represent a first attempt to create instruments that schools can use. They cannot at this time be considered the official state end-of-course exams but are being provided at the request of districts who would like some state instrument to verify the rigor of their classes or, in some cases, to use for purposes of student assessment. These prototypes will be available in Adobe Acrobat pdf format on the Secondary Credit Assessment website (www.michigan.gov/scas) on or about May 1. Districts are free to download the prototypes.

At this time, no testing services (printing of test booklets and answer documents, assessment administration services, scoring and reporting) are available. Districts, however, may print, use, and score the prototype exams to assess students who have taken these course/credit areas and/or to help gauge the extent to which current course content is aligned with the High School Content Expectations for Algebra I and Geometry. Because the pilot numbers were not sufficiently large to enable the Department to indicate a definitive cut score for passing or earning credit, the Department may instead indicate a

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

KATHLEEN N. STRAUS – PRESIDENT • JOHN C. AUSTIN – VICE PRESIDENT
CAROLYN L. CURTIN – SECRETARY • MARIANNE YARED MCGUIRE – TREASURER
NANCY DANHOF – NASBE DELEGATE • ELIZABETH W. BAUER
REGINALD M. TURNER • CASANDRA E. ULBRICH

608 WEST ALLEGAN STREET • P.O. BOX 30008 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909
www.michigan.gov/mde • (517) 373-3324

score range in which a locally determined passing score could be set. Further information about this will be available when the tests are posted on the web.

Guidelines for the use of end-of-course exams are still under development. At this time, however, the Department strongly advises that where an end-of-course assessment is used as the final exam for a student taking a class or course (as opposed to “testing out” without having taken the class), the score on the end-of-course exam should not count for more than 20-25% of the student’s final grade in the class.

Second, Evans Newton Incorporated has developed an Algebra I examination from test items in their item bank. An example of this exam can be found on their website (www.evansnewton.com/michigan). This company has indicated that the test is available for purchase at \$2 per student (minimum \$200) but it is not planning on offering testing services for schools that choose to administer it. Please contact Evans Newton for further information about their examination. Other vendors might be able to supply an Algebra I examination as well.

Third, the Department has requested funding to begin the development of the assessments for the other course/credit areas. If provided by the legislature, this funding would permit the Department to begin the development of some of the assessments this summer. Our priority areas are course/credit areas that freshman or sophomores would typically take, including Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, and English 9. If funds permit, assessments would also be created this year in Chemistry and English 10. The Department cannot undertake the development of the assessments for Social Studies until the high school content expectations are developed and approved. Since we are not certain when this will occur, we have deferred the development of the assessments in this area until the expectations are available.

The Department’s goal is to have a test contractor in place by this fall, and through the use of item developers here in Michigan combined with the item bank resources of the vendor selected to assist the state, we hope to provide testing services to interested local districts by a year from now, at least in the areas listed above. Much work needs to be done to realize this goal, and funding is also necessary for this goal to be achieved. We remain optimistic, however, that this work will be accomplished.

We will periodically keep you informed about our progress in developing the Secondary Credit Assessment System. If you have any questions about this memorandum or the resources mentioned in it, please feel free to contact Ed Roeber via e-mail at roeber@michigan.gov or at (517) 373-0739.